

MONTGOMERY COUNTY GOVERNMENT
EMPLOYEE ORGANIZATION
50 MONROE STREET - ROOM 201
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND 20850
279-1025

MEMORANDUM

October 27, 1983

TO: Montgomery County Charter Review Commission
FROM: Gino Renne, President, M.C.G.E.O.
SUBJECT: Collective Bargaining

I am Gino Renne, newly elected President of M.C.G.E.O., the recognized representative of twenty-three hundred County employees within the Office, Professional and Technical Units.

Collective bargaining with binding arbitration, agency shop, and a no strike clause is long overdue County employees currently excluded from this process. Since mid 1982, M.C.G.E.O. has had a labor relationship with the County under the provisions of Meet and Confer. Since then, and prior to, County employees have suffered reduced benefits, primarily in terms of Cost of Living Adjustments and yearly increments. R.I.F.'s are becoming more common. County employees are depicted in the

media as an over-funded tax burden. In effect, things do not look promising for public employees. This of course is not the County's fault. It is the fault of every employee excluded from Collective Bargaining who is content with the current arrangement of Meet and Confer.

Since recently taking office, I cannot be overly critical of those persons in County Government who represent the interest of the County. I am confident they confer in good faith, and I am pleased with the sincere reception they have given M.C.G.E.O. I would simply like to state our position on this issue as I stated to Mr. Torgesen during our last Meet and Confer session--that Collective Bargaining be a top priority.

Allow me to explain what our concern is with Meet and Confer, and why we think we are entitled to Collective Bargaining.

First, under Meet and Confer the reality is that we request; and they decide. What they decide, is what goes. There is no third party to mediate any dispute or impasse. Basically, what we have is a relationship of paternalism. Generally known in labor circles as "we take care of our own however, we decide what's best." This concept is intellectually offensive to those who can think and reason for themselves regarding issues having impact on working conditions which currently prevail. By the

same token, most of the criticism aimed at Collective Bargaining for public employees is based on the following assumptions:

1) Elected Officials should not bargain with employees on budget issues.

2) Collective Bargaining implies that tax dollars are at stake.

3) If Collective Bargaining is adopted, the taxpayers loose because workers will bargain for higher pay, which will ultimately inflate the budget.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Collective Bargaining would not make public workers fiscally irresponsible. No one knows better than us who pays our salaries, and who our bosses really are. We would be the last to place selfish interest to the detriment of the taxpayers. After all, public workers are taxpayers themselves.

In this same light, our electorate are among the most well informed and well educated in the country. I truly believe that the majority of the people in this county do not view Collective Bargaining as a fiscal threat.

In closing, we accept the fact that the Teachers and the Police have won Collective Bargaining as an effective tool to solve labor disputes. To deny other County employees the same consideration would be unjust and contrary to democratic principles.